

Conference on Disarmament

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Final record of the one thousand two hundred and sixty-third plenary meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 19 June 2012, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Kari Kahiluoto..... (Finland)

The President: I declare open the 1263rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to extend a warm welcome to Dr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland. I have the pleasure and honour to invite our distinguished guest to take the floor.

Mr. Tuomioja (Finland): It is a pleasure to be here today and to have this opportunity to present Finnish thoughts on disarmament at this forum now that our presidency is drawing on its end. It has been some seven years since the last time I addressed this Conference back in 2005, and it is nice to be here at the "United Nations in the heart of Europe".

In my statement seven years ago, I noted that the Conference on Disarmament can justifiably be proud of having managed to create international norms on disarmament. This, of course, remains valid today – this body has achieved much in the past. However, back in 2005 I further noted that for the past years the Conference had done little but rest on its laurels and that this immobility was a source of concern for us. Unfortunately, this is also very much true today. Efforts to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament have not borne fruit; time flies but the impasse continues and our concerns remain.

We believe that the Conference should without further delay begin negotiations on key issues. We are fully prepared to proceed on all four core issues in a balanced and equitable manner, with our own preference being to commence negotiations on the fissile material cut-off treaty. An FMCT would take us a step closer to our goal of a world without nuclear weapons, and would also be essential for our non-proliferation efforts.

But how do we move forward from the current stalemate? Interesting ideas and proposals, including those presented by the Secretary-General, have been presented. It is true that practical steps, such as streamlining the Conference's processes, increasing its transparency, as well as enhancing its accessibility to civil-society organizations, could possibly take us further, but that is not enough. The impasse in the Conference is not the result of its procedural rules. Political will is needed to make the Conference do what it is mandated to do: negotiate. Thematic discussions like the ones we are having today do not replace negotiations, but at best they can at least pave the way for negotiations.

By resuming negotiations, the Conference on Disarmament could regain its authority as the sole multilateral negotiating body on disarmament, while now its very existence seems to be jeopardized. The Conference must redeem itself before it is too late, because if we lose the Conference on Disarmament, we stand to lose a lot. The Conference, as the sole multilateral negotiating forum that takes different national security concerns into account, is indeed something that Finland, as a smaller country, does not want to lose. It is only in the Conference on Disarmament and as a member of it that a country such as Finland has a permanent right to participate on an equal footing in negotiations on potential new treaty instruments in the field of nuclear disarmament.

Based on the schedule of activities that the Conference agreed upon last month, the plenary today is concentrating on nuclear disarmament. Let me stress that Finland is a strong supporter of disarmament, and we continue to urge all States to work towards concrete nuclear disarmament, through concrete actions. I would also like to note that Finland continues to believe that short-range tactical nuclear weapons systems remain in a blind spot of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation scenery. We consider that the time would be ripe to introduce treaty-based and verifiable measures on short-range tactical nuclear weapons systems and thus codify and build upon unilateral steps announced in 1991, already over 20 years ago.

Being one of the original States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Finland has attached great importance to that treaty from its inception. Now that the current review cycle of this cornerstone of international security

and stability is well under way, Finland is fully committed to further strengthening the NPT regime and all its three pillars. We are ready to do our utmost in supporting disarmament and actively promoting a safer world in any possible way we can.

Let me touch upon one example. In October last year, Finland was designated as the host Government for a conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be held in 2012. Simultaneously, Under-Secretary Laajava of the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs was appointed as facilitator for the conference preparations.

The facilitator gave his first report on the consultations at the first session of the Preparatory Committee in Vienna in May. He was able to report that while substantial progress has been made, further and intensified efforts are still needed in order to ensure the convening of a successful conference. The goal itself, the establishment of a zone, is shared by everyone, but views differ on how and in what time frame to get there. Work still lies ahead as regards meeting the expectations of all States of the region in order to ensure their participation in the conference.

The urgency of the issue has been raised in the consultations, as have the recent regional developments. It is against this background that it is clear that intensified cooperation between the facilitator, conveners of the conference and the States of the region is required, although ultimately the responsibility for a successful conference lies with the States of the region. The facilitator will continue doing his utmost to foster common ground in this process.

Finland, as the host Government, is ready to host the conference at any time in 2012. December has been frequently mentioned in the consultations as a possibility. We now look forward to further concrete input from the States of the region as regards the substantive and organizational aspects of the conference.

The facilitator has a clear goal and commitment to continue working towards the organization of the conference in 2012 as agreed. In order to reach our shared goal of establishing the zone, now is the time to ensure that a successful conference in 2012 marks a starting point in the process leading to this.

Let me also use this opportunity to spend a few minutes talking about the developments related to everyday weapons of mass destruction – that is conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons.

Irresponsible transfers of conventional arms can easily lead to destabilization of security in various States and regions, contribute to human rights abuses, especially those of women and children, and add to internal conflicts. It is unfortunate that international trade in conventional arms from the most technologically sophisticated weaponry to more common arms has remained outside global binding rules. Today no set of commonly agreed norms exists.

In the past years we have worked hard to fix this gap. Preparations for an international arms trade treaty (ATT) began as far back as 2006. Finland, as one of the original co-authors of the ATT, has aimed actively to further the preparations and negotiations on the ATT towards universal regulation of the international arms trade. The ATT is now really within our reach, and this momentum must not be lost.

An efficient treaty will include a clear aim, a broad definition of various types of arms transfers like brokering, and the widest possible and modern arms scope. In addition to the most sophisticated and technologically advanced conventional arms, the scope should also include small arms and light weapons, as well as ammunition, which are often diverted to others than the intended end users.

The ATT enjoys wide support in numbers, but important open questions still remain. Concluding the treaty in a United Nations conference is, therefore, not to be taken for granted. However, personally I am very hopeful of a successful conclusion to the ATT negotiations at the end of July. This would mean an important step forward and a means with which the international community can try to reduce problems caused by the arms trade and enhance respect for human rights.

It needs to be stressed that an ATT in July would not mean an end to our work. We need to continue to promote actively a universally effective treaty. The universality and efficiency of the ATT requires wide adherence from all of us. This is why it should include provisions on assistance to those States which need it. States like Finland need to assume responsibility for assisting in facilitating adherence to the treaty, if so desired.

The arms trade treaty would regulate the legal trade in conventional arms, and also indirectly address the problem of illegal arms trafficking, which results in an alarming number of casualties each year, and which has harmful and destabilizing effects on societies. It should be remembered that illegal arms usually start out as legal arms but end up somewhere not intended.

There is a direct link between security and development: armed conflicts deny development. It is of the utmost importance that we give our full support to all efforts trying to prevent conflicts arising. Regulating the trade and preventing the illicit circulation of weapons are a crucial means of support.

I am very pleased to draw the Conference's attention to Finland's accession to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, the so-called Ottawa Convention. Finland deposited its instrument of accession with the United Nations Secretary-General on 9 January this year, and the Government of Finland has finalized all the national constitutional measures required for the entry into force of the Convention. The Ottawa Convention will enter into force for Finland in about a week's time, on the first of July. We will fully comply with our obligations under the Convention. The key obligation for us in Finland is to destroy our anti-personnel mines by 2016. We have already respected the humanitarian aspects of the Convention for a long time.

So, let me use this opportunity to recapitulate some key points of Finland's humanitarian mine action policy. Finland has always had a responsible mine policy, and we have always promoted the Ottawa Convention objectives. The Government of Finland started funding humanitarian mine action in 1991. Since the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention in 1999, Finland has contributed over 80 million euros to humanitarian mine action.

For us, mine detection and clearance, assistance for the care, rehabilitation and social and economic integration of mine victims, as well as support for mine awareness projects, are mutually reinforcing and complementary. Mine action is also an important element of post-conflict reconstruction efforts. As a party to the Ottawa Convention, we will follow the same responsible policy. In spite of pressure for budget cuts, Finland will continue its funding to humanitarian mine action, and in fact we are hoping to increase mine action funding to the level of 6 million euros annually by 2014.

We have now entered the last week of the Finnish presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and before concluding I would like to use this opportunity to thank our P6 predecessors at the 2012 session — Ecuador, Egypt and Ethiopia — for their hard work and commitment to getting the Conference back on track. Let me also extend my best wishes to the two remaining Conference presidents for the 2012 session, France and Germany, who can count on Finland's cooperation and support.

Let me end with the same remark that I began with. The Conference on Disarmament remains, regrettably, in a stalemate; but it has achieved much in the past and there is no good reason why it should not be allowed to do so in the future. Therefore, I join others in once again urging members of the Conference to take the necessary steps to take us forward.

The President: I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland for his statement.

Allow me now to suspend the meeting for a short moment in order to escort the Minister from the chamber.

The meeting was briefly suspended.

The President: The plenary meeting is now resumed. Before turning to our substantive business of the day, allow me, on behalf of the Conference and myself, to bid farewell to our distinguished colleague Ambassador Dian Triansyah Djani from Indonesia. During his tenure in Geneva, Ambassador Djani has shown great professionalism combined with impressive diplomatic skills. On behalf of the Conference, I would like to thank him for his many valuable contributions to the work of the Conference during his tenure and to offer our sincere wishes for his success and satisfaction in his new assignment.

I would now like to give the floor to Ambassador Djani for his farewell statement.

Mr. Djani (Indonesia): Thank you very much, Mr. President, for the kind words addressed to me. Allow me first of all to commend the statement made by Mr. Tuomioja, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, which was an inspiring and thought-provoking statement at this critical juncture in the history of the Conference on Disarmament.

As I prepare to leave Geneva for my next assignment, may I seek colleagues' indulgence to share some personal reflections on the Conference on Disarmament? Having being posted to Geneva in the late 1990s, I can still recall that the Conference had just completed the difficult negotiations on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. However, no programme of activity has moved forward since 1996.

I saw a glimmer of hope that the Conference on Disarmament would make progress when again I assumed my assignment in Geneva in March 2009. Under the presidency of Algeria, the Conference was able to adopt the programme of work contained in CD/1864 in May 2009. According to my minister, I was the most successful ambassador in the history of the Indonesian Permanent Mission in Geneva, having been able to restart the Conference on Disarmament negotiations within two months – or maybe I brought luck to the Conference. But my “success” was short-lived. Unfortunately, the Conference failed to implement its programme of work for the remainder of that year and was unable to start any substantive work.

Since then, a number of constructive proposals have been put forward. A draft decision on a programme of work for the 2012 session, as contained in document CD/1933/Rev.1, proposed by Egypt last March, again failed to reach consensus and prevented the commencement of substantive discussion.

We have allowed the Conference on Disarmament to remain dormant for 16 years. A sense of frustration in the Conference is unacceptable. In the circumstances, we need to ponder and ask ourselves whether the Conference is still relevant as the sole forum for multilateral negotiations on disarmament. Do we want to be held hostage by our own inability to reach consensus on a balanced and comprehensive programme of work? Do we really want the Conference on Disarmament to lose its credibility and wither away? I sometimes wonder myself: should I still be attending the Conference on Disarmament? And some colleagues have asked these questions several times. I said I would be back in the Conference on Disarmament when I give my farewell speech; and today I do so.

Nevertheless, in the last few years we have witnessed important progress at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. The Russian Federation and the United States have negotiated and concluded a new treaty on the reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms. We have a consensus outcome from the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and had a successful Global Nuclear Security Summit.

Last year, under Indonesia's chairmanship, member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) concluded negotiations with the nuclear-weapon States on the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, or SEANWFZ. This breakthrough came after more than 10 years of negotiations. Hopefully the signing of the protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty could be realized soon, in this very year of 2012.

Indonesia ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty on 6 December 2011. This reaffirms Indonesia's long-standing commitment to global nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We have expectations that others will follow our example. Because what is needed now is unilateral action by countries, to boost confidence when multilateral efforts are lacking.

Indonesia views these as positive measures, and joins the international call for nuclear-weapon States to undertake complete nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament has always been Indonesia's highest priority, and we have always been committed to efforts to achieve a world free from nuclear weapons. As a country that does not have nuclear weapons and will never have them, and that does not even have nuclear energy for peaceful use, we have credibility to continue to pursue substantive negotiations. My delegation believes that pursuing nuclear disarmament is the very rationale for the establishment of the Conference on Disarmament.

In a message to the Conference on 24 January 2012, the United Nations Secretary-General stated: "In 2012, the future of the Conference will be under the spotlight as never before. Lamenting the constraints of the rules of procedure or the 'absence of political will' can no longer suffice as explanations for any further lack of progress. The General Assembly is seized of the matter and, if the Conference remains deadlocked, is ready to consider other options to move the disarmament agenda forward." This is a strong message that the Conference on Disarmament could at any time cease to function, should the current situation persist.

At the high-level segment of the Conference on Disarmament on 28 February 2012, Dr. Marty M. Natalegawa, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, mentioned that progress is possible. But it is possible only through shared commitment, intensive dialogue and constructive engagement.

We have ample information, studies, works, seminars, symposia and what have you on the four priority issues of the Conference on Disarmament. It is without question that we attach importance to all of them and want to have movement in a balanced and equitable manner. But if we cannot have progress on all four issues, let us start from the most subtle one, negative security assurances, so as to build confidence. But can the Conference on Disarmament do that without a programme of work?

We cannot expect miracles and wait for a conducive environment so as to have the programme of work adopted. But a degree of flexibility on the part of the Conference member States is required in this regard. What is needed also is bold initiatives and innovative approaches. We should dare to try new ways and means; otherwise the Conference becomes irrelevant. We should enlarge the membership and invite other stakeholders to attend the meetings. As Indonesia is a democratic country, I cannot explain to my domestic constituency that the Conference on Disarmament is the only United Nations institution in which NGOs are not allowed to participate actively, while others,

including the Human Rights Council, have embraced civil society. The nuclear issue and nuclear safety affect the common people and are not the prerogative of Governments only.

It is sinful to remain in a stalemate. It is high time that we reviewed the Conference on Disarmament and its way of doing things. I have just come from a meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), where at present members are reviewing the work of UNCTAD and developed members are chanting the mantra of having results-oriented management and a results-based organization. We should have the same approach in the Conference on Disarmament and have a results-based organization. If there is no result in the near future in the Conference, then we should admit defeat and find other places, events or mechanisms to pursue our dream of having a world that is free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, dear colleagues, finally, I would like to thank you for the friendship and cooperation extended to me, which I will always cherish. I congratulate past P6 Presidents who have tried their hand at reinvigorating the Conference. I would like to extend my gratitude to Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, Secretary-General of the Conference, who has guided us, as well as to the secretariat and, of course, the interpreters.

I am honoured to have worked with professional ambassadors and diplomats in the Conference on Disarmament, and I wish you all the best with the momentous task of continuing the fight against nuclear weapons. To quote an old Indonesian proverb, "Sinful are those that remain silent while dangers lurk behind". Let us not be silent in our quest for the common good of mankind.

On a parting note, I was once asked by Indonesian dignitaries the question: "Why is the Conference on Disarmament chamber so dark and gloomy?" This question often puzzled me, but now, after three years and three months, I have the answer. The Conference on Disarmament chamber will be light and warm when the large curtain in the back of the podium is opened, and that will only happen if we have a programme of work and the Conference resumes substantive negotiations. I was surprised today – this is the first time I have seen the curtain open. I see a glimmer of hope that the stage is set for progress and act one of the drama of nuclear disarmament will commence. I hope we all will see the light of day when the curtain is continuously opened and the stage is set for progress.

I bid you all farewell and good luck in your solemn endeavours.

The President: I thank Ambassador Djani for his statement.

As per the revised schedule of activities contained in document CD/WP.571/Rev.1, today's plenary meeting will be focusing on the issue of "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament" and on "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters", with a general focus on nuclear disarmament.

Before beginning our substantive discussions on this topic, which I hope will be interactive, I would like to enquire whether any delegation wishes to raise any other issue first. This appears not to be the case. As was the case for our earlier discussions during the Finnish presidency on the substantive items on our agenda, the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) has provided some background notes, for which I am grateful, and I would like to read out an abbreviated text based on these notes:

Nuclear disarmament was the subject of the first resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946. The first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD-I) made clear in its consensus resolution that the accumulation of weapons, particularly nuclear weapons, constituted much more a threat than a protection for mankind. At its initial session in 1979, the Committee on Disarmament (precursor of the Conference on Disarmament)

established by SSOD-I agreed a list of 10 issues for its future work, the so-called “Decalogue”, the first of which was “Nuclear weapons in all its aspects”.

Influenced by the preparations for the NPT Review and Extension Conference and its outcome, and in the aftermath of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty negotiations, a range of proposals emerged, including from the Group of 21, calling for the establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate on a phased programme for the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework, as well as a proposal from South Africa for an ad hoc committee “to deliberate upon practical steps for systematic and progressive efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons as well as to identify if and when one or more such steps should be the subject of negotiations in the Conference”.

This approach has been reflected in many subsequent draft work programmes.

In 1998, the Conference on Disarmament established subsidiary bodies on fissile material and negative security assurances but not on nuclear disarmament per se.

Thereafter mandates for subsidiary bodies were fused into a single document, under which no progress has been made on any of the core issues, including nuclear disarmament. None of the work programmes proposed during the current deadlock has entailed a negotiating mandate for nuclear disarmament.

In 2012, this year, the proposal for a programme of work introduced as CD/1933/Rev.I sought to strengthen the relevant mandate through the term “deal with nuclear disarmament”, in contrast to CD/1864’s notion of an exchange of views on this issue.

I now turn to the list of speakers for today, and I give first the floor to the Ambassador of Malaysia.

Mr. Muhammad (Malaysia): Mr. President, before I begin my statement, let me join you in wishing Ambassador Djani well in his new role as the deputy Foreign Minister of Indonesia and hope that he continues to live up to his name, burning himself out of existence so others can see – his name, Dian, in English means “candle”.

Malaysia has always maintained a principled position on general and complete disarmament of weapons of mass destruction and maintained that measures to achieve this goal should be through the multilateral process. Malaysia is already a party to the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention. These two conventions were completed in record time, and we wonder why a similar convention on nuclear weapons could not even be initiated. A complete and total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only solution to the possible use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

In this regard, we wish to highlight Malaysia’s commitment to the nuclear disarmament process. In 1996, Malaysia initiated a resolution entitled “Advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons” at the United Nations General Assembly. The resolution has since then been tabled annually. This resolution, inter alia, continues to underline the unanimous conclusion of the Court that there exists an obligation to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control. The resolution continues to receive growing support from member States, including a few States that possess nuclear weapons.

Malaysia also joined the group of lead sponsors of the resolution on “Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems” adopted by the United Nations General

Assembly at its sixty-fifth session. Malaysia strongly believes that taking nuclear weapons off alert status is an immediate action and practical step to reduce the risk of accidental nuclear war and enhance the security of all States. We believe that such a measure is a practical qualitative step that complements the quantitative step of reduction. In this regard, Malaysia calls for recognition that reductions in alert levels would contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament through the enhancement of confidence-building and transparency measures and a diminishing role for nuclear weapons.

As a State party to the NPT, Malaysia attaches great importance to it and calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to accelerate concrete progress on the steps leading to nuclear disarmament, as outlined in action 5 of the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. States parties are required to fulfil their respective obligations under the NPT in a transparent, irreversible and verifiable manner.

While it is important to focus international attention on concrete steps toward nuclear disarmament which are achievable in the short term, we are of the view that it is equally important to simultaneously consider the requirements for a comprehensive nuclear weapon disarmament treaty as the final destination of nuclear disarmament. We feel that the further development of an incremental, comprehensive approach would assist in the implementation of the action plan agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference, and would accelerate the process of complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

We also take this opportunity to express our deep concern about the nuclear weapons modernization programmes that are being undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States. Such programmes undermine existing nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regimes, and do not contribute towards building confidence among non-nuclear-weapon States. This will eventually deal a serious blow to the viability of any disarmament negotiating treaty in general.

We believe that the only effective and sustainable way to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons is through the total elimination of nuclear weapons by all those that possess such weapons. The concept of nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States is unsustainable and unjust.

Malaysia strongly believes that consideration of these elements, which are required for the complete prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons, would enable gaps to be identified, preparatory work undertaken and further steps completed. We nevertheless hope that the Conference would agree in the near future on the commencement of multilateral negotiations leading to the conclusion of a nuclear weapons convention or a framework of instruments for the complete abolition and elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Getahun (Ethiopia): Allow me to express our deep appreciation to the Foreign Minister of Finland, Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, for his address to the Conference and welcome the assumption by Finland of the role as host and facilitator of the conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East in the context of the 2010 NPT Review Conference, which called for a United Nations-sponsored conference in 2012.

Ethiopia welcomes all efforts in support of and for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, complemented by unilateral declarations by nuclear-weapon States to provide security assurances as important processes towards ensuring security on a regional basis. It is now imperative that we move from unilateral declarations to an agreement on a legally binding negative assurances instrument against the use and threat of nuclear weapons. In the final analysis, total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only durable way of providing a guarantee against the threat or use of nuclear weapons, which remains to date an elusive goal.

The Conference on Disarmament is the only multilateral body for negotiating disarmament. We should therefore continue the work towards reaching a consensus on a programme of work. Ethiopia reiterates its position that multilateralism in disarmament negotiation is the most dependable and inclusive avenue for concerted global action against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the dangers they pose to international peace and security. I am optimistic that the substantive discussions made thus far, based on the schedule of activities set out in CD/WP.571/Rev.1, will help the Conference enhance understanding of different positions and perhaps provide indications for possible solutions for the programme of work, as stressed this morning by the Foreign Minister of Finland.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to express our appreciation for the manner in which you have conducted the meetings of the Conference during your presidency. I would like to point out specifically the innovative steps you have taken to present short factual presentations from UNIDIR on each topic at every session, which greatly help us to recall important past deliberations.

Our best wishes go to Ambassador Djani of Indonesia as he assumes his new high-level responsibilities back home, and we thank him for his reflections on the work of the Conference.

Mr. Combrink (South Africa): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the seven members of the New Agenda Coalition: Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden and my own country, South Africa.

Mr. President, the New Agenda Coalition wishes to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and to express our appreciation for your efforts aimed at finding a solution to the continuing impasse in the Conference.

At the outset, we also wish to thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Mr. Erkki Tuomioja, for his participation in the plenary this morning, and to acknowledge the important role being played by Finland, in particular as the host Government of the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, to be attended by all States in the Middle East, and as the provider of the facilitator, Under-Secretary of State Jaako Laajava of Finland. We look forward to the successful convening of this important conference.

As members of the New Agenda Coalition, we have always supported the soonest commencement of substantive work on nuclear disarmament in the Conference and regret that despite the efforts made by you, Mr. President, as well as by previous Presidents — including a programme of work submitted under the Egyptian presidency — the Conference has yet to break out of its long-standing deadlock.

No nuclear weapons, irrespective of their type or where they are located, can ever be safe in any hands, whether of a State or a non-State actor. As long as these weapons exist, the possibility of their use, whether by accident or design, will remain. Similarly, as long as some States continue to possess them, citing security reasons for doing so, others may aspire to acquire them. The New Agenda Coalition therefore rejects any justification for the continued retention or presumption of the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons. This is clearly incompatible with the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime and the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The only absolute guarantee against the use of nuclear weapons is their complete elimination and the assurance that they will never be produced again. As the New Agenda Coalition has always maintained, what does not exist cannot proliferate. As such, pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, it is critical that all remaining challenges be tackled head-on. These include, amongst others, the commencement of substantive work on

nuclear disarmament, including the negotiation and conclusion of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices that should fulfil both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives. In addition, the legitimate interest of the non-nuclear-weapon States in receiving unequivocal and legally binding security assurances from the nuclear-weapon States should be addressed.

While welcoming the progress made through the entry into force of the new START agreement between the Russian Federation and the United States that has resulted in a reduction of the overall number of operationally deployed strategic nuclear weapons, the New Agenda Coalition continues to be concerned that several thousand nuclear warheads remain intact and that no progress can be discerned with respect to the reduction and elimination of nuclear weapons stationed outside the territories of the nuclear-weapon States.

Similarly, we are concerned about the continued modernization of nuclear arsenals, together with the vast resources allocated for this purpose. The New Agenda Coalition reiterates that any reduction, as with all disarmament measures undertaken, must be irreversible, transparent and internationally verifiable. Linked to this is the continued role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies. Regrettably, nuclear deterrence policies remain a defining characteristic of the military doctrines of nuclear-weapon States and the security alliances that they are party to. In this regard, the New Agenda Coalition recalls the agreements reached at the 2000 and 2010 NPT review conferences that further concrete measures must be taken, including decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapon systems, with a view to ensuring that all nuclear weapons are removed from high alert status.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remains an important outstanding issue. It constitutes a core element of the international disarmament and non-proliferation regime – raising the threshold for the acquisition of nuclear weapons, preventing a qualitative arms race and reducing the reliance on nuclear weapons in security strategies.

The New Agenda Coalition recalls the founding agreement and the grand bargain struck by all States parties to the NPT, where the nuclear-weapon States committed to nuclear disarmament, in return for which the non-nuclear-weapon States undertook not to develop nuclear weapons. We also recall that in endorsing this agreement, all NPT States parties affirmed the inalienable right to pursue the peaceful development of research, production and use of nuclear energy.

Significant progress has been made to meet the nuclear non-proliferation objectives of the NPT, limiting the horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons. Whilst modest gains have been made towards our goal of a world free from nuclear weapons, the threat posed by nuclear weapons endures and the nuclear disarmament side of the NPT bargain has yet to be realized. Indeed, the continued existence of nuclear weapons and the threat of their proliferation contradict the very commitments made by States parties under the NPT, as well as the positions expressed, including in this forum, by those outside the treaty in support of a world free from nuclear weapons.

In order to achieve our vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world, the New Agenda Coalition believes that the following concrete actions, among others, should be undertaken.

Firstly, all States possessing nuclear weapons, whether inside or outside the NPT, must make concrete, systematic and progressive efforts with regard to nuclear disarmament. In addition, enhanced transparency measures, including regular reports, are vital to engender confidence that such efforts are being made.

Second, it is imperative that the follow-on measures to the new START agreement, aimed at achieving deeper reductions in nuclear arsenals, should address all deployed and non-deployed nuclear weapons, both strategic and non-strategic.

Third, there is an urgent need to develop adequate and efficient nuclear disarmament verification capabilities and legally binding verification arrangements. Efforts must be accelerated towards the development of multilateral arrangements for placing fissile material no longer required for military purposes under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Fourth, given the indiscriminate and disproportionate nature of nuclear weapons, all States should reaffirm that their use would constitute a violation of international humanitarian law. In addition, there is a need to explore and further consider the catastrophic humanitarian consequences associated with them, including consistency with international law and particularly international humanitarian law.

Fifth, those States that are part of military alliances, which include nuclear-weapon States, should report, as a significant transparency and confidence-building measure, on steps taken or future steps planned to reduce and eliminate the role of nuclear weapons in collective security doctrines.

Sixth, all States should support the successful convening of the 2012 conference on the establishment of a Middle East free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction.

Seventh, all States should work towards the construction of a comprehensive framework of mutually reinforcing instruments for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Such a legally binding framework for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons must include clearly defined benchmarks and timelines, backed by a strong system of verification, in order to be efficient and credible.

Eighth, although some positive progress has been made towards the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, which was negotiated in this forum, further progress is urgently required.

Lastly, no effort should be spared to achieve the universality of the NPT, and all States should desist from actions that can negatively affect prospects in this regard. India, Israel and Pakistan should join the NPT promptly and without conditions. Moreover, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea should rescind its announced withdrawal from the NPT and verifiably terminate its nuclear weapons programme.

Earlier this month, we participated in the first session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. We wish to pay tribute to our colleague, Ambassador Woolcott of Australia, for his role as chair of the Preparatory Committee, which facilitated a smooth start to the 2015 review cycle.

The action plan that emerged from the 2010 NPT Review Conference not only reaffirmed the commitment of the nuclear-weapon States to unequivocally accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI of the Treaty, but also recommitted the nuclear-weapon States to accelerate progress on the steps agreed in 1995 and 2000 to advance the implementation of article VI. Importantly, the Conference also re-emphasized the commitment to apply the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to nuclear disarmament measures.

The New Agenda Coalition recognizes the initial steps that had been taken towards realizing the agreed actions contained in the 2010 NPT action plan for a process leading to the full implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East, which is an essential

element of the outcome of the 1995 Conference and of the basis on which the treaty was indefinitely extended without a vote in 1995. We reiterate the continued validity of the 1995 resolution and call upon all States to exert all efforts towards its full implementation.

The 2012 Preparatory Committee has, once again, confirmed the commitment of States parties to the NPT as the foundation of the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. This welcome reaffirmation, and the importance placed on the 2010 action plan as our guiding document in the short term, are positive outcomes from the Preparatory Committee. These must be capitalized upon in the coming years of the review cycle so that true progress can be made, and recognized, at the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

The New Agenda Coalition is disappointed that the Conference on Disarmament has, despite intensified efforts, not been able to implement the three specific recommendations of the 2010 NPT action plan on nuclear disarmament, due to the continued lack of consensus on a programme of work. The New Agenda Coalition calls on all States to work together to overcome obstacles within the international disarmament machinery, including in the Conference on Disarmament, which are inhibiting efforts to advance the cause of nuclear disarmament in a multilateral context.

We stand ready to fully and constructively engage in a collective effort towards the construction of a comprehensive legally binding framework of mutually reinforcing instruments for the achievement and maintenance of a world without nuclear weapons. Given the threat posed and the catastrophic humanitarian consequences associated with the use of these instruments of mass annihilation, this task must no longer be postponed.

While I have the floor, may I also use this opportunity, in my national capacity, to bid farewell to Ambassador Djani of Indonesia and to thank him for his contribution to our work and for the bonds of friendship and close cooperation that exist between our delegations? We wish him well in his future position.

Mr. Puentes (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, first of all, since this is the first time that we have taken the floor, allow me to congratulate you on having assumed the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, and for the noteworthy manner in which you have performed the task.

My delegation aligns itself with those who wish Ambassador Djani every success in his future role. We know that this will be the case, Ambassador Djani being a person of great experience in diplomatic life.

Mr. President, allow me to begin my statement by reading out article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The Treaty states that: "Each of the Parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."

This legal obligation assumed by the parties to the Treaty has not been complied with. More than 40 years after the adoption of the Treaty, there are still more than 20,000 nuclear weapons in existence. Of these, around 5,000 are ready to be used immediately. The use of no more than an infinitesimal part of the world's enormous nuclear arsenal, the explosion of 100 warheads, would trigger a nuclear winter.

The existence of defence doctrines based on so-called nuclear deterrence is worrying and unacceptable. Under this pretext, billions are allocated to the development of new types of nuclear weapons, even though this runs counter to the agreements adopted in the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The nuclear Powers must fulfil the commitments assumed under article IV of the Treaty, and also with the agreements adopted in the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conferences in 2000 and 2010.

There is no doubt that international security is threatened by the existence of nuclear weapons, and their total elimination is a question of survival for the human race. For this reason, it is of priority importance to move towards the elimination and absolute prohibition of the nuclear arsenal.

The Conference on Disarmament is the appropriate forum to contribute to an endeavour of such transcendental importance by adopting, without further delay, a convention on nuclear disarmament that provides for the full elimination of these weapons within a given time frame. We all know that the failure to adopt a programme of work is a clear consequence of the lack of political will on the part of some to achieve true progress on nuclear disarmament. The current status quo clearly suits States that base their interest in domination on nuclear arsenals which are a threat to life on the planet.

We reiterate the call of the Non-Aligned Movement to work on convening an international conference to identify ways and means to eliminate nuclear weapons. This commitment was also endorsed by the heads of State of Latin America and the Caribbean in a Special Communiqué on the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons adopted at the Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), held in December 2011.

Those of us that do not have nuclear weapons remain threatened by the destructive potential of these weapons and the impact that a warlike confrontation would have wherever the weapons were used.

While the total elimination of nuclear weapons is left pending, it is necessary to give priority to concluding a legally binding international instrument through which the nuclear-weapon States commit not to use or threaten to use this type of weapon against non-nuclear-weapon States. Unilateral declarations and voluntary promises are not enough.

Nuclear disarmament cannot continue to be a pending task that is constantly postponed. On the contrary, there can be no greater priority for the Conference on Disarmament than that of achieving the prohibition and total elimination of nuclear weapons from the face of the earth. Cuba will continue to work tirelessly to attain this objective.

Mr. Ri Jang Gon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Mr. President, since this is the first time that the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has taken the floor under your presidency, we would like to extend our congratulations to the Finnish presidency and express our appreciation for the smooth conduct of its work so far.

Peace is necessary for the people living on the earth as well as future generations. The peace advocated by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is one whereby the sovereignty and dignity of every nation and country are ensured and everybody can promote friendship and cooperation with equal opportunities. Those countries which should play a responsible role in ensuring global peace and stability vie with each other in spending the bulk of their State budgets on developing new types of weapons. They are paying lip service to peace while pushing ahead with a policy of hegemony. Their talk about peace is a smokescreen for exercising the right to high-handed action. Peace can never be genuine as long as high-handed practices are allowed.

Nuclear disarmament occupies the most important place in building a peaceful world. The nuclear disarmament that the international community wishes for is the total and complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The attitude of certain nuclear Powers who disapprove and marginalize nuclear disarmament runs counter to the aspirations of the

international community. The basic reason for the prolonged little progress in the Conference is that some States refuse nuclear disarmament and pursue only one aspect of non-proliferation. The double-faced behaviour of certain Powers towards the nuclear issue shows clearly what the genuine purpose is behind the so-called non-proliferation they often loudly speak about. It is precisely to misuse non-proliferation in attacking other sovereign States. They also pursue a hostile policy on regime change under the pretext of non-proliferation while concealing their own previous records of proliferation.

It is noted in particular that certain Powers with the world's largest state-of-the-art nuclear arsenals seek a new plan of nuclear strikes against specific countries by listing them as the target of a pre-emptive nuclear strike, and speed up the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons. Worse still, the modernization of nuclear weapons has reached a dangerous stage that makes possible a pre-emptive nuclear strike, as it is combined with a missile defence system. These kind of irresponsible and arbitrary acts bring about unrest in the international community and generate mistrust and inequality among States.

The reality indicates that nuclear disarmament is the top task directly related to world peace and security and the survival of mankind. It is impossible to guarantee the promotion of genuine nuclear disarmament only with the existing current legal devices.

My delegation holds that the Conference on Disarmament should naturally have its own focus on commencing negotiations for nuclear disarmament aimed at the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. In this connection, we consider that priority should be given to concluding at an early date an international convention placing all States under an obligation to prohibit the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons and to eliminate them completely.

Nuclear-weapon States should stop immediately the qualitative improvement and development of nuclear weapon systems and should adopt a comprehensive programme with an agreed time frame for a reduction of nuclear weapons and their delivery means.

For the present, the nuclear-weapon States should take action-oriented steps towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons, such as removing all sorts of nuclear threats, putting an end to the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons, withdrawing nuclear weapons deployed abroad, and withdrawing the nuclear umbrella provided to selected countries.

Nuclear-weapon States should also give up nuclear doctrines based on first use of nuclear weapons, pledge not to be the first to use nuclear weapons and respond to the call for negotiations to conclude a relevant international convention.

Only when practical steps are taken for the total elimination of nuclear weapons in a legally binding framework will there be a positive impact on the building of a secure and safe world.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea will make its contribution to the world's efforts to realize nuclear disarmament with a strong sense of responsibility.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): At the beginning, I would like to join other colleagues in welcoming the statement of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, in which, among other issues, he reported on the diligent efforts of Finland as facilitator of the conference on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, an issue to which my country, as the regional initiator of the idea, attaches great importance. I would also like to bid farewell to Ambassador Djani of Indonesia, and wish him all the best for his future endeavours.

The continued existence of tens of thousands of nuclear warheads poses a deep and dangerous threat to international stability, international security and international safety. As

long as these nuclear weapons exist and are being modernized, there will always be a risk of their use and of vertical or horizontal proliferation.

That is why nuclear disarmament is the highest priority for us and for the majority of the States parties in the Conference on Disarmament and other international forums. The existing legal obligations in the framework of the NPT, the agreed final documents of the NPT review conferences — especially the 1995 principles and objectives that paved the way for an indefinite extension of the treaty — SSOD-I and the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice constitute firm legal obligations with no caveat that would allow the nuclear-weapon States to dodge their responsibility for nuclear disarmament. It is also clear that the indefinite extension of the NPT in no way means the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons. Therefore the response to the increasing wish of the international community cannot be a piecemeal undertaking by nuclear-weapon States.

While some major nuclear Powers continue to pursue policies based on the concept of nuclear deterrence, despite the end of the cold war, and have voraciously modernized their legal nuclear weapons, they have adamantly refused to commence negotiations on nuclear disarmament and have officially threatened non-nuclear-weapon States with nuclear weapons. How can they expect the international community to accept as a justified argument that the bit-by-bit approach is a solution that will achieve the so-called “Nuclear Zero” and a world free of nuclear weapons?

Based on paragraph 38 of SSOD-I, “Negotiations on partial measures of disarmament should be conducted concurrently with negotiations on more comprehensive measures and should be followed by negotiations leading to a treaty on general and complete disarmament under effective international control”. Indeed, after so many years, the lack of effective and systematic progress towards implementing nuclear disarmament obligations under article VI of the NPT is disturbing and deplorable.

I am aware that over the past half century, tens of thousands of nuclear warheads have been disassembled, but many of them have been recycled as warheads of different types or even remanufactured. Nuclear warheads undergo a vicious life cycle that includes manufacture, storage, deployment and then storage again, followed by disassembly and remanufacture or transfer into weapons-grade fissile material stockpiles to be ready for future use. Therefore the mere reduction in the number of warheads cannot be regarded as fulfilling nuclear disarmament undertakings.

Nuclear disarmament is an obligation, and to fulfil this obligation the adoption and implementation of the following eight measures and principles as a package are required. None of these measures solely and by itself is a panacea for nuclear disarmament problems but together, as a composite whole, they can contribute a lot to the realization of nuclear disarmament.

First, transparency: the threat of a nuclear arsenal is a common threat to all human beings. The elimination of this threat should be done in a transparent manner. During the cold war, nuclear secrecy was a deception tool for preserving supremacy in nuclear rivalries. It is a long time since we passed that era and its presumptions. Now is the right time for nuclear-weapon States to convince their military establishments, as major impediments in this regard, that transparency can enhance national security rather than weaken it. If nuclear-weapon States are honest in fulfilling their obligations and they do not intend to divert their nuclear warheads again, this intention should be demonstrated by an international system of material protection, control and accounting. The international community should be aware of all stocks of nuclear warheads, the targeted warheads, the inventory and full information about the means of delivery of the nuclear arsenals, full information about weapons-grade nuclear material and the facility to monitor their reduction and destruction as transparency measures. In this connection, we ask all the

nuclear-weapon States to start reporting in this regard, based on a standard reporting form as called for in the 2010 NPT action plan.

Second, irreversibility: the reduction in the arsenal should not be limited to decommissioning nuclear warheads. It should be done in a manner that prevents any reloading of the material. Therefore, the principle of irreversibility is of the utmost importance in the realization of nuclear disarmament.

Third, verifiability: disarmament should provide for adequate measures of verification in order to create the necessary confidence and ensure that they are being observed by all the international community. Therefore, the principle of verifiability is vital in the realization of nuclear disarmament. The form and modalities of the verification should be determined, on the basis of the purpose, scope and nature of the activities involved, by the international community. The verification system should provide for the application of a combination of several methods of verification as well as other compliance procedures. For example, a warhead or amount of weapons-grade fissile material in a container could be entered into the verification regime by affixing a simple tag and noting the type and subtype of the warhead and other detailed information. It might also be necessary to note the type of the container and the orientation of the warhead within it. Deployed warheads, or warheads that are taken from containers and deployed, might have a tag affixed in an approved manner and could also have a seal to provide assurances that the tag still refers to the same warhead. Later, the system might acquire detailed information for validating the identity of the warhead, and the destruction of the warheads should be verified under an international verification regime.

Fourth, a ban on use: removing the threat or use of nuclear weapons, whether deliberate or accidental, is the most acute and urgent task of the present day. Mankind is confronted with the most serious threat ever perceived. All States, in particular nuclear-weapon States, should consider various proposals designed to secure the avoidance of the use of nuclear weapons and the prevention of nuclear war. In this context, providing the necessary assurances in a legally binding instrument on the non-use of nuclear weapons and effective arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons are imperative. We have no other choice; either we proceed to disarmament or face annihilation.

Fifth, the time frame: the international community cannot wait forever to witness the total elimination of nuclear weapons. A clear time frame with a target date for the full implementation of article VI, namely 2025, as proposed by the Non-Aligned Movement, is an urgent need.

Sixth, budget reduction: it is time to realize the long overdue goal of SSOD-I to abandon the use of force in international relations and to seek security in disarmament. The economic and social consequences of the continued existence and modernization of nuclear weapons are so detrimental that their continuation is obviously destroying the international economic order. In a world of limited resources, economic crisis and tough austerity measures, there is a close relationship between expenditure on nuclear weapons and economic and social development. It is unfortunate that military expenditures are reaching very high levels, in dramatic contrast to the poverty in which two thirds of the world population live. Hundreds of billions of dollars are spent annually on qualitative improvements to nuclear weapons.

Seventh, qualitative and quantitative disarmament measures: these are two sides of one coin, and both are important for halting the arms race and preventing nuclear war. As the world remains over-involved in efforts to reduce the number of nuclear weapons or horizontal proliferation, some nuclear-weapon States have a free hand in the unabated vertical proliferation and qualitative improvement of their arsenal. Efforts in this respect

must include negotiation on the limitation and cessation of the qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons.

Eighth, nuclear doctrines: in this regard the nuclear-weapon States should probably adopt necessary measures for the unequivocal and absolute diminishing of the role and significance of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts, doctrines and policies.

In conclusion, taking into account the above measures and principles and also the fact that government support for a convention on eliminating nuclear weapons has grown significantly in recent years, I believe it is high time that the Conference on Disarmament established an ad hoc committee to start negotiations on a nuclear weapons convention as a matter of top priority.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): I thought it was very appropriate for our Malaysian colleague to point out that the name Dian in the rich *bahasa* of Indonesia and Malaysia means “candle”. We in English have a saying that it is “better to light a single candle than curse the darkness”. I would assert that Ambassador Djani has indeed lit many, many candles here in Geneva, even if, sadly, here in the Conference on Disarmament a Stygian darkness still prevails.

We recently discussed negative security assurances as part of our thematic debate in this chamber. Since Ambassador Djani, among his many distinguishing characteristics, is a modest man, let me point out what a key role he played on behalf of ASEAN, chairing here in Geneva negotiations with the five permanent members of the Security Council — the five nuclear-weapon States of the NPT — on a protocol to the South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone. It was really remarkable work, and we do very much look forward to signing that negative security assurance as a protocol to the South-East Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone. Of course, we thank all our partners in ASEAN, but I really would like to underline our thanks for the role that he played and, like my other colleagues, wish him all the best in his new job. I would also like to thank the foreign minister of Finland for coming to address us today and for his broad-ranging statement, including his words on the work that Finland and the facilitator, Mr. Laajava, is doing on behalf of the very important goal of a 2012 conference on a Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction.

Speaking as a representative of one of the depositaries and a convener, we have been working closely and hard with the other conveners and all other parties to move forward on that very important goal. Of course I heard his statement, and I quote from his speech that “ultimately the responsibility for a successful conference lies with the States of the region”. I also wanted to turn to another quote from the distinguished Foreign Minister’s statement today, where he said that “an FMCT would take us a step closer to our goal of a world without nuclear weapons”. We agree, and indeed when we talk about nuclear disarmament, I would reiterate that it is indeed that step-by-step process here and across the disarmament spectrum that we see as the road to a world without nuclear weapons.

Finally, I would note that my Government looks forward to hosting at the end of this month another conference of those five nuclear-weapon States — the permanent members of the Security Council. We very much hope that this conference, in Washington, will contribute substantially to our collective goal of nuclear disarmament.

Let me conclude by thanking you, Mr. President, for your efforts on our behalf and thank your Government for sending you to us to play this role.

Ms. Adamson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, like the speakers before me, I want to thank you for everything you have done during your presidency, which I think you have carried forward with a great degree of neutrality while also keeping us moving forward.

In a spirit of being interactive, I just wanted to pick up on a few of the comments made today. First, I want to thank the representative of South Africa for his intervention on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, which I thought was a very thoughtful and thorough statement. Certainly, one of the themes which you reiterated now was the need to work on a series of mutually reinforcing instruments, or framework if you like, under which we can take forward discussions. From my delegation's perspective, we certainly agree with that. We think we have to have step-by-step and interlinking instruments that will take us closer to the goal of a world without nuclear weapons.

I also wanted to pick up on something that our distinguished colleague from the Islamic Republic of Iran said, when he said that the nuclear-weapon States refused to negotiate on disarmament. I think that's just not true. We went along with CD/1864, we signed up to CD/1933 and we would go along with CD/1933 again if someone were to bring it to the table; it is a comprehensive approach.

What is true is that we are stuck at the multilateral level. We are finding an impasse which means none of us get anything: people who want to prevent an arms race in outer space, people who want negative security assurances, people who want a fissile material cut-off treaty, people who want nuclear disarmament, none of us is getting anything. But we have been ready to take forward a programme of work on all of those issues.

I wanted to finish by paying tribute to Ambassador Djani, our Indonesian colleague. He said something which resonated with me, which was that even if the multilateral track is stuck, it is incumbent on countries to think about unilateral steps. I would go a step further and talk about regional steps. I am a firm believer in "think global, act local" as a motto, and I think the work we did together on SEANWFZ is indicative of something in that respect. Ambassador Djani's way of chairing the meeting last summer ... actually it's quite a quick process if you think of how long it takes us to get things done. The fact that we should be signing something this summer, that's quite quick.

And one thing that Ambassador Djani does in his chairing is to make people sort of justify ridiculous positions they may have. Now the way he does that is quite subtle. It was Ramadan last summer, and he said on a number of occasions, "I'm sorry, I must just be a bit tired because I really don't understand the point that you are making", which was a very gentle way of saying that it sounded a bit strange. But I think that his probing style and the interactive way he conducted negotiations is a lesson for us here in the Conference, in that he very gently encouraged people to set out their concerns and say what's bothering them. So I thank Ambassador Djani for that. And his colleagues in New York adopted the same approach too, and in Bali when we were negotiating. I think that's a very good sort of style, to make sure that there is a collective approach to moving forward. We wish Ambassador Djani well in his next role, and I'm sure that when we meet again, if I hear that "I'm not sure, I'm only the Chair", I'll know what he means, that he wants us to say things a bit more clearly and to explain ourselves. I would really like to thank him very much for everything he has done, and let's hope that that style could come back to the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Khelif (Algeria) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the Algerian delegation would like to join previous speakers and express its profound thanks to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland for his visit to the Conference and his valuable statement. We would also like to offer warm congratulations to the Ambassador of Indonesia and sincerely wish him success in his professional and personal life. We thank him for the efforts he has made in the Conference while representing his country in this valuable forum.

(continued in French)

The delegation of Algeria does not have a prepared statement for this discussion on nuclear disarmament, since it has set out its position on this issue in detail in the past. Algeria would, however, like to highlight a few key points.

First of all, Algeria accords particular importance to nuclear disarmament, which constitutes the number one priority of the Conference on Disarmament. In their statements certain delegations have indicated that some countries, and many countries here, attach particular importance to nuclear disarmament, and we would like to say that nuclear disarmament is the priority of the Conference on Disarmament. It is not a priority for some countries, but it is the priority of the Conference on Disarmament, and the priority of the international community.

In order to guarantee nuclear disarmament, we think there are two key conditions that must be met. Otherwise it would simply be a matter of discussions and aspirations.

The first condition is that nuclear weapons must be delegitimized. So long as nuclear weapons have a particular status and political importance for certain countries as a means to protect their interests and guarantee security, it will be impossible to talk about nuclear disarmament, at least in the short or medium term, to the extent that we will still have interests to protect and security to defend.

Secondly, in order to ensure this nuclear disarmament, this obligation, which was recognized by the International Court of Justice in an advisory opinion issued in July 1996, must have a time-bound framework. Now that we are talking openly about nuclear disarmament as soon as the conditions are met, if we do not set a time frame, it will be hard to conceive of this nuclear disarmament. This approach is not new. It has been used for both biological and chemical weapons. In 1925, the States of the international community delegitimized the use of chemical and biological agents under the Protocol of 1925, and we have had a prohibition on biological weapons since 1972 and a prohibition on chemical weapons since 1995.

We think this procedure should also be used for nuclear weapons if we really want to ensure nuclear disarmament, because it would be unacceptable if some countries were to be able to reserve themselves the power and privilege to assure their security on the basis of nuclear disarmament, irrespective of the security of all other States of the international community. Of course progress has been made. We have listened with great interest to the reference to the START Treaty and to certain bilateral achievements. Unfortunately, however, this progress is not sufficient to achieve nuclear disarmament because it does not involve the necessary break with the ideology and doctrine of the cold war. This doctrine, which justifies the use of nuclear weapons, still exists, is still present. Consequently, if we are unable to break with this doctrine, with this logic, we cannot advance along the path to nuclear disarmament.

In the spirit of interactive discussion, I would like to address a few aspects of the paper which was prepared by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR). We would have liked this paper to refer expressly to the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of Justice, because this is a reference document for nuclear disarmament. This was not an anodyne event or something that may be treated as such. In 1996, in its advisory opinion, the International Court of Justice stated that there was an obligation in terms of both means and ends to ensure nuclear disarmament, and a reference to this opinion in a paper designed to serve as point of departure for the discussions would have provided useful context for the discussion.

Secondly, the reference to decision CD/1864 at the end of the paper tends to slightly diminish the importance of this decision, which was adopted in 2009 and created great hope

for the Conference and the international community. We would like to emphasize that decision CD/1864 constitutes a step forward relative to all previous initiatives insofar as — and here I would like to align myself with what was said by the Ambassador of the United Kingdom — it was the first time in the life of the Conference on Disarmament that all States members, including nuclear-weapon States, agreed to the establishment of a subsidiary body to devote its efforts to discussing and considering nuclear disarmament and the prevention of an arms race in outer space, adding to the subsidiary bodies established in 1998 to consider a fissile material cut-off treaty and negative security assurances.

Before the adoption of decision CD/1864, there had never been a subsidiary body to address the issue of nuclear disarmament or the question of preventing an arms race in outer space. We were there in 2009, this was a step forward, but unfortunately this step forward has not been realized. We also need to consider the wording of the mandates on nuclear disarmament and the other issues related to the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to negative security assurances within the framework of the general text, the general balance of the text of decision CD/1864, specifically its preamble, which was left open and gave States parties latitude to allow the mandates on these questions to evolve in the event that there was agreement.

These were some of the points that the delegation of Algeria wished to highlight during this discussion on nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Jon Yong Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation has asked for the floor to comment very briefly on the observations by the New Agenda Coalition on my country's withdrawal from the NPT. Our comment is to give a correct understanding of the issue to the New Agenda Coalition. To speak honestly, its remarks reflected a one-sided position, and we do not believe that its remarks in any way help to settle the issue. They cannot be construed otherwise than as intentionally ignoring the essence of the matter, which is directly related to the existence of one country, and are unfair.

My delegation has no doubt that the New Agenda Coalition is fully aware of what the essence is and what is needed to resolve the issue fundamentally. As my delegation has clarified its position on several occasions, our withdrawal from the NPT is a legitimate self-defence measure taken to protect the prime interests and security of my country from the increasing threat of outside force. The New Agenda Coalition would be well advised to refrain from making such remarks in the coming days.

Mr. Daryaei (Islamic Republic of Iran): I appreciated the remarks of the distinguished Ambassador of the United Kingdom on my intervention. From her intervention, what I understood is that she does not have any problem in starting negotiations on nuclear disarmament in the Conference on Disarmament and that the mandate contained in documents CD/1864 and CD/1933/Rev.1 provides the necessary grounds for a formal start of negotiations on nuclear disarmament. If this is the case, we welcome this announcement by the United Kingdom.

Mr. Kwon Haeryong (Republic of Korea): I would like to make a brief comment on the intervention by the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is relevant that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea withdrew from the NPT and has developed other nuclear weapon programmes which constitute a serious threat to the Korean peninsula, East Asia and the world. Many United Nations Security Council resolutions have urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon nuclear weapon programmes and return early to the NPT, and at the session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 NPT Review Conference held in last May, many delegations urged the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to return early to the NPT.

The President: I thank the representative of the Republic of Korea for his statement, and I give the floor one more time to the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. As President, I would request him to comment on this discussion in one more statement and after that to take into account that this is an issue specific to the NPT and not to the Conference on Disarmament, and that it is an issue where discussion potentially can be also conducted bilaterally and not in plenary of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Jon Yong Ryong (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): My delegation has taken the floor once again to respond to the utterances of the South Korean delegation. In the first place, my delegation categorically rejects these utterances as a grave provocation against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. It is a hard fact that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has purchased nuclear weapons. The actual reality is that the United States of America's persistently hostile policy compelled the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to develop a nuclear deterrent to cope with it. It is an undying historical feat by our leader Kim Jong-il, who wisely led the completion of a nuclear deterrent. If South Korea is worried about these realities, it should tell the United States of America to revoke its hostile policy against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, not blame fellow countrymen.

We will never give up what has already been declared, but we will react to any provocation with the toughest measures. We take this opportunity to remind the South Korean delegation that this august body is not a place for confrontation between North and South.

The President: As I said, I would wish to close this discussion, but I recognize the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kwon Haeryong (Republic of Korea): I apologize for asking for the floor a second time. First of all, the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea did not properly address my country by its official name, "the Republic of Korea"; my delegation would like to request, through the Chair, that the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea address my country as the "Republic of Korea". Secondly, the delegation of North Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, mentioned that it is in possession of nuclear weapons. I would like to make a brief comment on the nuclear weapon programme in North Korea.

A couple of weeks ago, North Korea, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, announced that it had revised its constitution and declared itself a nuclear-armed country. I would like to make a brief comment on that revised constitution saying that it is a nuclear-armed State. My delegation wants to draw your attention to United Nations Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874. I just recall that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea cannot have the status of a nuclear-weapon State in accordance with the NPT, and the final document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference also clearly declared that it cannot have the status of a nuclear-weapon State in accordance with the NPT in any case. I would strongly urge the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to fulfil its commitments under the Six-Party Talks, including the complete and verifiable abandonment of all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes.

Lastly, I would like to touch upon one element. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has implemented its nuclear and missile programme while facing a dire and chronic food shortage. The Human Rights Council here in Geneva and the WFP (World Food Programme) and FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) have stressed that the chronic and severe food shortage in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea was one of the most pressing human rights issues. The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has spent huge amounts of money developing its nuclear and

missile programme. This has been a major cause of the food shortage in that country. For example, a missile launch in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea is estimated to cost as much as 850 million dollars. That amount of money is enough to buy 1.4 million tons of rice, which would partially resolve the food shortage in that country. It would be better for the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to focus on improving the basic living conditions of the people instead of spending resources on developing a nuclear weapons programme, which is clearly a violation of the NPT and several United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The President: I think the presidency would wish to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and consider that, as both the delegate of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the delegate of the Republic of Korea have twice taken the floor, I have the authority to end this discussion here. I would ask if there are any other speakers on this issue. I give the floor to the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. Kennedy (United States of America): I had no intention of taking the floor again but, as my country was named, I wanted to put in an appeal that we all discuss seriously the issues at hand rather than engage in such attacks. I must say that for a country to first treat us to a lecture on nuclear disarmament, which I listened to seriously, and then later to boast about developing nuclear weapons is quite extraordinary. As I say, I would just appeal to everyone to focus on the agenda at hand and try and keep polemics out of this.

Mr. Elatawy (Egypt): Thank you, Mr. President. We would like to thank you for the great efforts that you have made during your presidency of the Conference.

I am taking the floor in reaction to what was mentioned by the delegation of the United Kingdom, to welcome what the Ambassador of the United Kingdom said regarding the CD/1933 programme of work and her invitation to possibly take up this document for future consultation as a way forward to seek a programme of work for the Conference.

Mr. Ri Jang Gon (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I will be guided by the rules of this house, but actually my delegation has only responded once to the remarks made by the delegation of South Korea. The right of reply we exercised only once; that's why I have to exercise it twice. As for the remarks made by the South Korean delegation today, the diplomats and all delegations present here know very well that all of a sudden the South Korean delegation provoked us and pinpointed our security. I wonder if the South Korean delegation knows the essence of the security issue. Security is very important: it is because of security that we are discussing here many items, including nuclear disarmament, but the South Korean delegation neglects this security issue.

I understand the position of South Korea: South Korea is not an independent entity because it is under the protection of others, and that's why they are neglecting their security. But my country is an independent and sovereign State which is still very much concerned with national security. We cannot jeopardize our national security. Everyone can understand that if somebody loses his security identity, then in order to survive we have to defend ourselves. This is understandable. He mentions living standards. We have difficulties, but we are overcoming these difficulties and we are sure that in the near future the world will see our prosperous country. We are struggling to attain this goal but we cannot jeopardize our own security.

Lastly, I would advise the South Korean delegation that South Korea should not follow the policy of others but should try to promote peace and security in the world. Once again, I would advise South Korea not to provoke this confrontation between North and South in the international arena. It's a pity that the one cut-off Korean peninsula is fighting

in this forum. We didn't intend to do that, but we exercise this right of reply to the South Korean delegation rumours.

The President: I thank the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and now, as President of the Conference on Disarmament, I rule that this specific discussion is now over. I stand corrected on the question of the number of rights of reply, and as we are in an official plenary all statements of course will be reflected in the official records of the Conference.

This now concludes my list of speakers, and I would like to ask if any other delegation wishes to take the floor. I would ask the representative of the Republic of Korea if he is asking for the floor on another issue or to continue the exchange of rights of reply, with the delegation of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. I am asking if you wish not to continue.

I do not see any other requests for the floor, so as this meeting ends the Finnish presidency, I would just wish to say a few concluding words. As far as substance goes, I refer to the statement made by Foreign Minister Tuomioja at the opening of this plenary session of the Conference on Disarmament.

I wish specifically to thank my own staff, and also staff in the back office. I wish to thank the Secretary-General and his representatives and the staff of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, and also I wish to thank UNIDIR for providing the background papers which I have had the privilege to read. I wish very much to thank the interpreters for their indulgence at the one meeting which exceeded the time limit, and to thank the technical and security staff for supporting the conduct of these meetings. Finally, I wish to thank my P6 colleagues, and especially the Ambassador of Ethiopia, for setting the scene for the Finnish presidency of the Conference on Disarmament.

This concludes our business for today. The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday, 26 June, at 10 a.m. under the presidency of France, to whom I wish the best of luck and bon voyage.

The meeting rose at 12.15 p.m.